American Society of Neuroimaging Response to:

“Higher Use of Advanced Imaging Services by Providers Who Self-Refer Costing Medicare Millions”
- A 2012 GAO report commissioned by Sens. Max Baucus (D-Mont.) and Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), and Reps. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.), Sander Levin (D-Mich.), and Pete Stark (D-Calif.).

- GAO uses a deficient methodology\(^1\) which grossly misrepresents utilization and costs\(^{1,2}\)
- The report *does not* show that self-referring providers use more imaging\(^{1,2}\)
- The Hospital-ER complex – a nexus of high cost healthcare -\(^{3,4}\) is excluded by GAO
- Non-hospital MRI & CT = \(\frac{1}{2}\)\% of total spending, and decreasing
- Self-referred MRI & CT = \(\frac{1}{6}\)\% of total spending, and decreasing
- Hospital-based MRI & CT = 4\% of total spending\(^2\), *and growing*\(^{3,4}\)
- Hospital –based imaging is very costly, for no added benefit\(^{3,4}\)
- Self-referring physicians compete with the Hospital, improve access, and reduce costs
- Implementing GAO recommendations would *increase* Medicare spending by billions\(^2\)

References


